

NOTES ON ADAIR COUNTY.

BY JOHN AVROE STEELE.

No. 22.

COL. WILLIAM CASEY, MRS JANE
GREENIE CASEY, AND JUDGE
ROBERT TODD.

In 1793, Casey caused to be opened and taught the first school ever taught within the bounds of Adair county. At least, it was the first school of which there is any record or tradition. He employed one Arthur Hopkins, who afterwards, resided at Lexington, to teach school for the period of one year, in Casey's and Butler's Station, and in Casey's Station, on Butler's Fork. For this service, Casey agreed to pay Hopkins the sum of fourteen pounds, and Isaac Butler, John Reynolds, Francis Pelham, John Harvey, Henry Rennick and William Butler, jointly, agreed to pay him ten pounds which in all amounted to less than ten dollars per month. The exceeding scarcity of money in the county, at the time, is shown, not only by the meager salary which was paid to the teacher, but the manner of its payment. When the years teaching had been finished, Isaac Butler, Wm. Butler, Reynolds, Pelham, Harvey and Rennick paid to the teacher, the ten pounds, which they had promised him, by giving to him orders upon Casey for the amounts due them for their services as spies upon the Indians. Casey was then the commander of the militia in the county. Casey discharged the twenty-four pounds due Hopkins, by conveying land to him. The lands, which were conveyed by Casey to Hopkins, were, afterwards, levied upon and sold to satisfy an execution in favor of one Settles, which was issued upon a judgment recovered in the Quarter Sessions Court, of Green county, in favor of Settles against Hopkins. The levy and sale were made by — Trabue, a deputy sheriff, and the land was purchased by Benjamin Lampton, the maternal grandfather of Mark Twain, who resided upon an adjoining tract of land.

When Green county was organized in 1792, it included the territory which comprises the present county of Adair, and in which Casey resided. Casey was appointed to the office of a judge of the Quarter Sessions Court, for Green county, and held the office for several years.

In 1799, Casey was elected a member of the convention which formulated the second constitution for the state of Kentucky, and his name is found subscribed to copies of that instrument. He was elected from the county of Green, which was then a very large county, but with not a very numerous population. Casey, at that time, resided at his "station" upon the Butler's Fork of Russell.

Casey was the first person who ever acted in the capacity of a personal representative of a deceased person, within the bounds of Green county, after its organization and before the creation of Adair county. The deceased was John Reynolds, who was

and resided either at Casey's and Butler's Station or at Casey's Station, upon Butler's Fork, and served as a spy upon the Indians from one of those stations and was one of the men, who employed Arthur Hopkins to teach school, as above related.

Casey, while residing upon Butler's Fork of Russell, represented Green county in the General Assembly, in 1795, and in 1800 and 1802, he sat in the General Assembly as a senator for the district in which Green county was situated. For the years, 1794 and 1795, he was the commander of the militia for Green county, and probably held the same position during other years, and, from that service, received the title of colonel, which he bore throughout the remainder of his life. After the creation of Adair county, he sat as a senator for his district, but there are no records now extant, which will show the exact years. He was evidently a very successful politician, as well as a fighter of the Indians. He was not a finished public speaker, and made no pretense to oratory, but was always able to present and defend his convictions in a way, that was convincing to his hearers. He spoke from the rostrum in a straight forward and simple, but impressive manner.

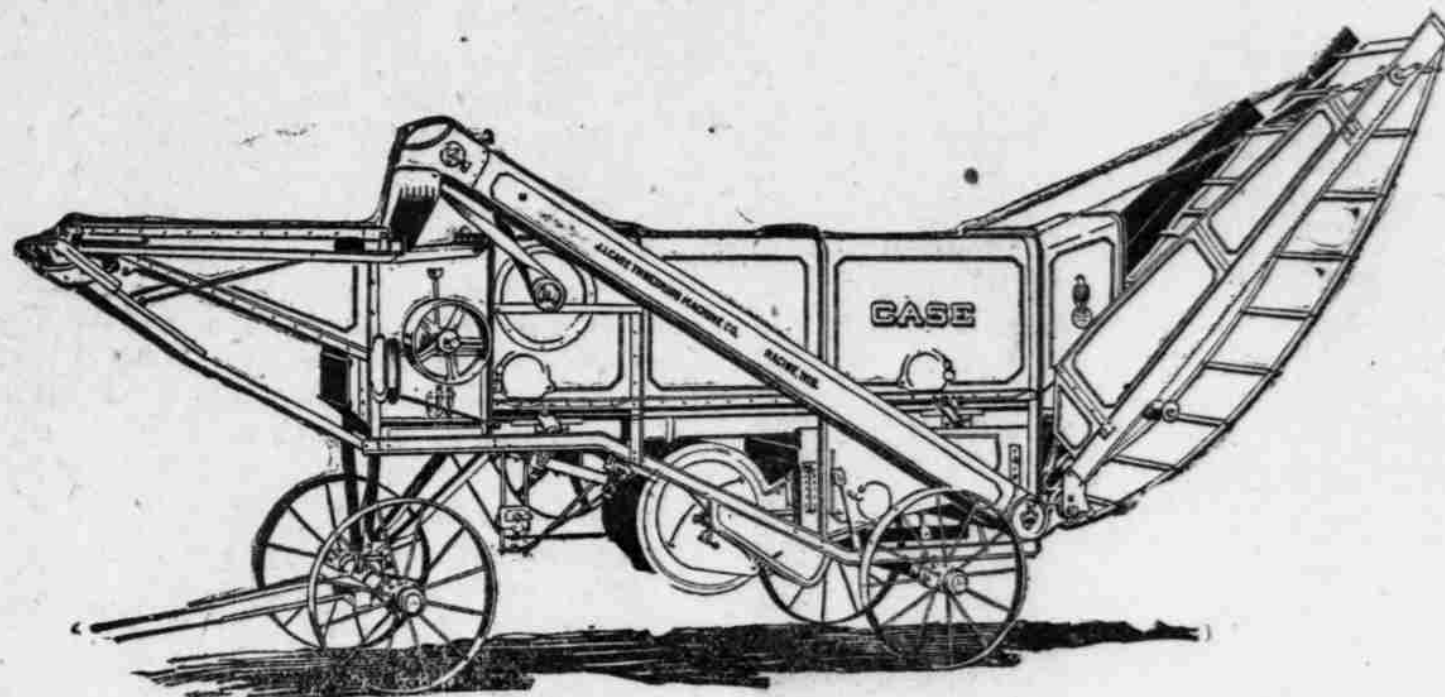
When the circuit court system was organized in Kentucky, the court consisted of a lawyer, who was the presiding judge of the court, and two associated judges, who were not necessarily lawyers. Col. Casey was made one of the associate judges of the circuit court for Adair county. The first circuit court for Adair county was held on the 7th day of February, 1803, by Robert Haskins and Wm. G. Bryant, the two assistant judges of the circuit court. On September 5th, 1803, Allen M. Wakefield, an attorney of Greensburg, Ky., filed a certificate showing that he, as a circuit judge, had been assigned for duty to the circuit composed of the courts held for Green, Adair, Cumberland and Barren, and thereafter, was, for several years, the presiding judge of the Adair circuit court. On February 4th, 1805, Col. William Casey was made an assistant judge of the Adair circuit court, and, on April 1st, 1805, Robert Todd became the other assistant judge. Casey and Todd, respectively, held their offices until the office of assistant judge of the circuit courts was abolished, about the year, 1815. Neither Casey nor Todd were lawyers, and if either of them had ever received to any extent a legal education, it is not now remembered. During the years in which Casey held the office of assistant judge of the circuit court, there were, frequently, terms of the court held, when the circuit and presiding judge, who was a lawyer, was not present, and upon these occasions, the courts were held by Casey and Todd, and from the records made, it appears, that all of the business of the court was transacted as though the circuit judge was present. Casey, being the senior assistant judge, upon the occasions of the absence of the circuit judge, became the presiding judge and signed the orders of the court. The spectacle was presented of this strong, slightly educated man, who had

since his earliest youth, with opportunity of acquainting himself with but few books, addressing himself to the administration of the laws and hearing and determining all the questions of law and equity, which arose in the courts of that time. He passed upon the sufficiency of the pleadings, as tested by the intricate rules of the common law, and administered justice between litigants, whose contentions often arose out of the principles of the laws, which related to the lands in a new country, where precedents were scarce and unknown.

WILLIAM LEWIS, 1833.

WOODSON LEWIS, 19

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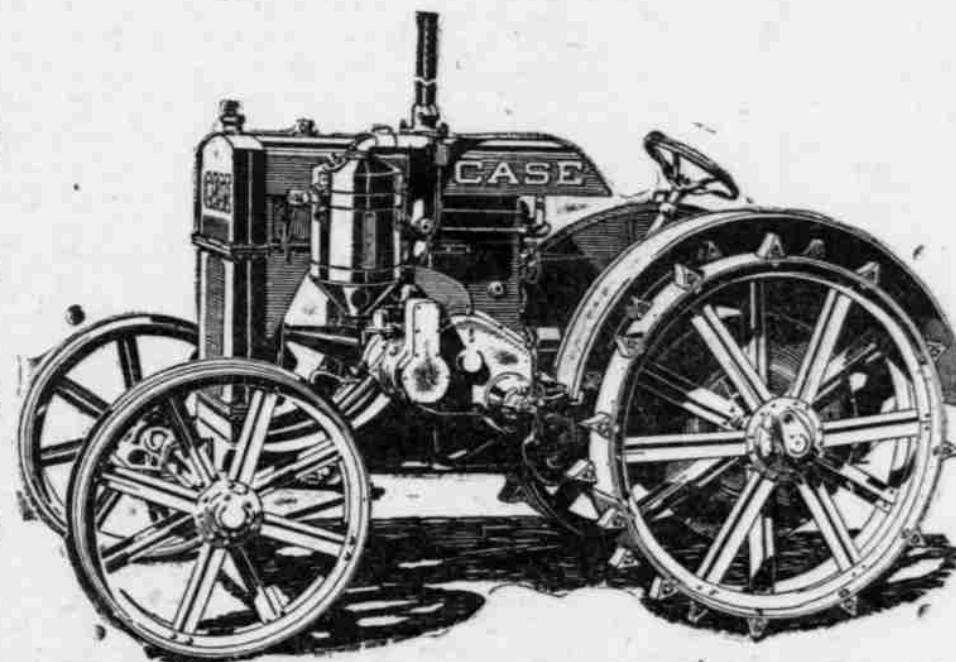
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To Be Continued.

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